6: Goudal--235 S-3 (1934) 1938 Laotians
186, 652

"When Mr. Paul Reynaud, then Minister for the Colonies, visited Indo-China in November 1931, the Annamite colony in Vientiane submitted to him a list of complaints which brought out the following points:

(1) Annamite emigration is a vital matter for Laos. Whether they like it or not, the Laotians must drop their policy of isolation and collaborate with the other races of the Union, and the necessary effort cannot be made by the indigenous population of Laos.

(2) In its present state, progress in Laos depends entirely on subsidies from the Federal Government; Laos must now take steps not only to meet its own expenditure but also to play an important part in the Indo-Chinese economic system, by the development of its natural wealth.".

7: Thompson--369 [2] J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 647, 652, 671, 177.64 France
636.64

"Of the budget expenditures one per cent was allotted to road building, when paths were almost non-existent in Laos. Fifty per cent of the revenues was absorbed by the administration. A subsidy to the company that navigated the Mekong cost 350,000 francs: the total revenues were 600,000, and all for the occasional transportation of the hundred European residents and their mail. The Laotians were much too amiable and indolent to protest against this state of affairs. They were a charming people, who knew nothing of French civilization but the pleasure of paying taxes. They asked little and so they got little. If this were true of the Laotians it was even more so of the mountain peoples. The country was administered as if it were exclusively inhabited by Laotians. The codes, and the mandarins who applied them, were Laotian. The Provincial Council, long the sole representative organization, had no delegate from the mountaineers. Buddhists were given a monopoly of the education, though the Yaos were Confucianist and the Khas fetishists. The administration concentrated on the valley-bound Laotians and ignored the scattered mountain peoples, who differed radically in religion, language, and customs. The Meos's reaction to the Laotians was shown by the massacre of 1920."

have been introduced in the upper reaches and can easily serve, during the high water period, nearly 200 kilometers in the Bassac reach and nearly 500 in the Vien-Tiane reach. But during the low-water period the stretch between Kratié and Khône is still served by pirogue over the greater part of the course. Then the navigable reach of Bassac is reduced to thirty kilometers for steam launches, and the Vien-Tiane reach requires transshipment by pirogue over some twenty kilometers between two stretches covered in the above manner. The two reaches are, moreover, separated by a 160-kilometer strip which is not navigable in any season.

The impetus has therefore been given, and the way lies open. Today it remains only to complete the work thus begun and to finish setting the necessary beacons and clearing the bed of rocks before navigation, and that is to say trade, can be expanded further. Let us recapitulate what has been done and what has been proposed.

First of all, from the budgetary point of view, a sum of 87,500 francs has so far figured annually in the budget of Laos under the label Studies and projects for the navigability of the Mékong. This sum was further increased in 1900, and in the budget for public works in the general interest the following credits appeared:

	francs
Navigability of the Upper Mekong. Purchase of materials for clearing rocks and laying beacons	25,000
[74] Clearing rocks and laying beacons in the lower reach	12,500
Clearing rocks and laying beacons in the middle and upper reaches	62,500
Continuation of studies	25,000
TOTAL	125,000(1)

(1) In 1901 the following figures appeared in the general budget:

Clearing rocks and setting beacons in the Upper Mekong in the lower and middle reaches	75,000
In the upper reach	25,000
Studies	25,000
TOTAL	125,000

It may therefore be assumed that several thousands of francs have already been spent to make the great river navigable. It must be admitted that so far the visible results have not compensated for the sacrifices made, and we prefer to suppose that such credits are

503 entered in the budget annually to satisfy the public opinion which
652 demands them, but that in reality they are far from being spent. If they have been used it has been without appreciable profit, probably as the result of the lack of a master plan governing the work to be accomplished. Indeed it is our earnest hope that expenditures of this size have not been occasioned by the few scientific missions composed of officers and engineers from the department of civil engineering.

Here, in this connection, is an extract from the interesting notice on Indo-China published at the time of the Universal Exposition of 1900:

503 "Since 1887 many missions have studied the reach between Kratié and Khône and have traced the routes which today enable the steamships of the River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] to navigate there during the high water season. But a great deal remains to be done, and a more complete work of clearing rocks and setting beacons, if pursued perseveringly and methodically, would certainly make it possible to increase the period of navigability by several months each year. The enlargement of the canal between Stung-Treng and Thboung-Kla has already made it possible for launches to ply between Don-Logna and Siem-Boc (2) all year long

(2) In May 1897, that is to say during the low water period, Lieutenant Commander Ytier was able to negotiate the stretch between Kratié and Stung-Treng in a launch which drew 1.5 meters of water (the Sambor). He concluded that after a few rocks had been cleared and buoys set out to mark the route the Mékong would be navigable between Kratié and Stung-Treng, during the low water period, for a boat with a draft of one meter and a speed of twelve knots in a speed trial. But he added that "navigation would always remain difficult or at least ticklish during the low water period, and that without a practical man, without a Talcon pilot, the shelves could not be negotiated and there would be an almost certain risk of running aground."

over a distance of sixty to eighty kilometers. [75] [Illustration] [76] [Blank page] [77] The same will certainly be true below Siem-Boc, in the part of the rapids which are properly known as those of Préapatang, when they have been more fully studied, buoyed and

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have any elected councils or parliamentary representation. Today it constitutes one of the five states in the Indo-Chinese union.

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A consequence of the unification of Laos was its division into provinces and the incorporation of its officials, who had heretofore been a staff apart, in the ranks of the Indo-China Civil Service.

The government commissioners have therefore become civil service administrators.

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Today each of the fourteen provinces of Laos is placed under the authority of an Administrator, and the latter is seconded by a civil service clerk.

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Native guard. In Laos there are no detachments of the troops stationed in Indo-China, but only a native civil guard [278] composed partly of Annamites and partly of Laotians. It constitutes a police force which is distributed in detachments of varying size under the command of inspectors and chief guardsmen. It is entirely at the disposition of the administrators who are heads of provinces. This native guard numbers twenty-seven inspectors and chief guardsmen and 850 men, of which 320 are volunteer Annamite enlisted men recruited in Annam and Tonkin, and 530 are natives recruited from all the races of Laos. It may be called on to lend its support, if the need arise, to the native authorities who are responsible for maintaining order and security in their respective territories. Peace and order are so perfect in Laos, however, that one can go about freely without an escort.

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The treasury service. The treasury service in Laos is headed by a bursar who holds the title of "Chief Bursar of the Treasury Service in Laos." He handles all matters dealing with receipts, expenditures and treasury operations in Laos in the same forms and according to the same rules as the other bursars who are heads of services in Indo-China.

He is assisted by a deputy bursar.

These two agents reside in Vien-Tiane.

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Medical service. This service includes three colonial physicians on detachment in Laos who are in charge of the infirmaries at Luang-Prabang, Vien-Tiane (formerly at Pak-Hin-Boun) and Khong. They care for all sick persons, whether European or native, as has been noted above (1).

(1) See Chapter III, Health Service.

644 The functionaries responsible for minor duties inside the palace, under the orders of their chief the Maha-Monti, are the:

Maha-Nosit, Lasa-Nosit, Lasa-Mat, Sanet, Sakame-Nane, Latsavat, Out-Thamonti, Sene-Thong-Niot, Sathipavot.

[652] [493] The treasurers, storekeepers and palace guards have the 647 titles of:

Phaya-Vi-Sai-Monthiene, Phone-Seuk-Khoua, Phone-Seuk-Sai.

697 Finally the jailers and scourgers (or executioners) under the command of the king or of the head of the justice department:

Phone-Tesak, Sa-Phakdi, Sa-Dab-Khame, Vong-Phouthone.

635 In the provinces, the head of a muong bears a title which is 631 personal to him, "Phaya" or "Phya," to which he adds that of "Tiao-Muong" and the name of the province, as Phaya-Si-Vorarat-Phrak-Di, Tiao-Muong-Vien-Tiane.

Under his command he has principal mandarins in the number of three, who bear the titles of "Oupahat," "Latsavong" and "Latsaboute." Each of them is generally responsible for the administration of one part of the muong, under the supervision of the "Tiao-Muong."

These high officials are seconded, depending on the importance of the muong, by a larger or smaller number of counselors or judges who bear the titles of "Sen," "Tiane," "Khang," etc.

Muongs are generally divided into cantons, and the heads of the [63] latter bear the title of "Taseng." Each canton includes several villages or "Bans," and each of these has at its head a mayor who is usually called "Pho-Ban" (the father of the village). The head of a village is aided by a kind of council or assembly of notables, the titles of whom are "Pia," "Luong," "Koun," "Sen," "Mune" or "Nai."

643 The four principal leaders of a muong, that is to say the "Tiao-646 Muong," the "Oupahat," the "Latsavong" and the "Latsaboute" (1),

(1) In the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, the heads of muongs bear the following titles: "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong), "Phya-Hua-Pahn" (Oupahat), "Phya-Balat" (Latsavong), "Phya-Kam" (Latsaboute). In accordance with custom, these offices are hereditary and sons succeed their fathers, except for the office of "Phaya" (Tiao-Muong) where the rule is not absolute.

are [494] elected either by the nobles or by commoners who possess certain aptitudes and sufficient intellectual culture. The whole population, nobles, officials and common people, are consulted. Then the

643 646 canton heads and heads of villages, who might be described as cantonal and municipal delegates, gather in the capital of the muong to vote on the names of candidates which are presented. The name of the one who obtains the most votes is then presented by the province administrator to the superior resident, who accepts or rejects him after studying his personal qualities, his aptitudes, his background, etc. In the case of a rejection the electors are consulted a second time. The superior resident names the four chiefs of muongs by delegation from the governor general. These latter may not begin office until they receive their commission, insignia and seal from the French government.

In general, the electors' choice falls on a son, brother or nephew of the high official who is to be replaced, unless he is unworthy or notoriously incapable.

635 647 Mandarins of lesser importance are named by the province head with the approval of the persons under his administration and of the superior resident.

647 652 Officials receive a salary only in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang and in the provinces of Vien-Tiane and Muong-Hou. Everywhere else they must be content with a fee equivalent to one-tenth of the sums they collect as taxes.

[693] In their capacity as judges, the muong authorities also collect legal costs and shares in the sums of certain fines, as is the custom of the land.

647 516 Such, in its general outline, is the organization of the Laotian administration. It generally functions well, is sufficient to the needs of the natives and makes it possible for us, despite the vast extent of our possession, to keep only a few European officials there.

[92] The outer forms of respect towards great men, mandarins and anyone who holds a rank are dictated by Laotian etiquette, as in Siam. One does not speak to a king, a [495] [Illustration] [496] [Blank page] [497] prince or a leader as one would to an equal or an inferior. There are special expressions which are peculiar to the representatives of certain social classes or to the holders of dignities. But even while it conserves, at bottom, the ritual ceremonial forms, Laotian etiquette is paternal and much more spontaneous and genuinely respectful than elsewhere.

When they speak to the king, to princes, to great men, etc., inferiors prostrate themselves, with forehead on clasped hands, near the ground, or with their hands clasped above their head. Outside of this particular case, those present may remain squatting, smoke, talk, laugh and even disturb the audience somewhat. Moreover, no lack

Whatsoever of respect is to be seen in this liberty.

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Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

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The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the Franco-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditures of Laos.

C. Opium

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One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1),

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

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Opium sales are constantly on the increase in Laos, moreover, and it is probable that receipts for 1900 have reached nearly 350,000 francs.

5. BUDGET

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The budget of Laos was created by a decree of the governor general dated September 30, 1895. The first budget was that of 1896. It varies little from one year to another, and amounts to about two million francs. The following are the exact figures:

	francs
1896	1,819,245
1897	1,918,207
1898	2,008,806
1899	1,988,700
1900	1,847,500
1901	1,896,85[illegible]

[506] Local receipts taken in in 1895 amounted to 356,925 francs. In 1900 they had risen to 516,250 francs, an increase of 159,325 francs. On the other hand, levies on the other parts of Indo-China which were necessary to balance the budget of Laos decreased by the same amount. In fact, since local resources are insufficient to cover expenses, it has been necessary to have recourses to subsidies provided by the other countries of the Indo-Chinese union. Thus Cochinchina provided 6/13 of the subsidy, Tonkin 5/13 and Cambodia 2/13. Since the creation of a general budget for Indo-China, the sum of these subsidies is entered there annually.

Each year a projected budget is prepared by the superior resident. It is presented to the Superior Council of Indo-China, which studies and approves it. Before it can become official, it must also be approved by the President of the Republic.

Here, as a sample, is the budget as established for the fiscal year 1900:

A. Receipts

	francs
Direct taxes.....	316,250
Miscellaneous taxes.....	200,000
Subsidy from general budget....	1,331,250
Total receipts....	1,847,500

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B. Expenditures

	francs
1. Superior residency	125,000
2. Commissionerships	462,500
3. Native guard	377,500
4. Medical services	57,500
5. Public works	127,500
6. Treasury	37,500
7. Transports	407,500
8. Miscellaneous expenses	252,500
Total expenditures	1,847,500

If the total expenditures are distributed over the entire population we obtain an average of 3.695 francs per inhabitant. Since local receipts [507] are only 1.032 francs per inhabitant, it follows that the subsidy by the general budget is 2.663 francs (1). It cannot be said that

(1) This figure is too high, in consequence of the profits realized on the sale of opium.

the population of French Laos is overburdened with taxes as compared [illustration here] with that of Siam or Siamese Laos, where each inhabitant's share is 3.75 and 1.575 francs, respectively.

It is to be hoped, and this is the goal towards which all the efforts of the administrators are tending, that the present situation will improve from year to year until such time as Laos has sufficient receipts to cover its expenditures, without recourse to a levy on the general budget.

[508] In order to attain this goal, increased revenues might perhaps be brought about through:

1. A gradual rise in the basic head tax and the amount of statute labor;

2. Various taxes which would result from utilization of the country's agricultural and mineral resources.

3. Settlement in the basin of the right bank of the Mekong, which is included in our zone of influence by the terms of the London declaration of January 15, 1896.

A rise in the basic head tax may be achieved without hurting the inhabitants by stimulating them to increase their scavenging operations and the cultivation of certain products. Moreover, the experiment has already been tried, and Laotian taxpayers, especially the Khas,

652 prefer to pay four shares in kind rather than two in money.

Furthermore, the division of taxpayers into two classes might perhaps be modified by providing uniformity of head taxes and of statute labor for all taxpayers.

These taxes in money and in kind might result in an increase over present revenues. Moreover, since the prices adopted for the purpose of calculating the value of natural products paid to the administration are established at a reasonable rate, such products might bring in appreciable profits if they were resold on certain Far Eastern markets.

As for the miscellaneous taxes and duties (to result from exit duties, exploitation of mines, farming, livestock breeding, etc.), they will be much more important the day when colonists provided with capital spread over the country.

It is incumbent on the administration to inform interested persons, by all possible means, of the exploitable resources of Laos, and also to give them the assurance that all their efforts will be seconded in an effective manner by the local agents.

000 Finally, in order to retain our prestige among our subjects in Indo-China, it is our duty to take possession of the former territory of Vien-Tiane (1) situated on the right bank of the Mekong, and this

(1) This territory corresponds to the zone of French influence of which mention is made in the London agreement of January 1898.

[509] in retribution for the attacks, ambushes and violences of every kind committed by Siamese agents ever since 1893 on our representatives our subjects, our protégés and our nationals.

Since this territory enjoys a more favorable disposition with respect to farming, and since it is much more heavily populated than that on the left bank, it would doubtless yield maximum revenues which would be higher than the present expenses of Laos. [510]

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